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ABSTRACT

This book addresses the state of contemporary U.S. cultural life, delineating a protracted and spiritually convulsive detonation which trembled with gathering force through North America and Western Europe from the mid-1950s through the early 1970s and tore apart the moral and intellectual fabric of society. The book is part cultural history, part spiritual damage report. It looks behind the received wisdom about the 1960s to the animating ideas, passions, and personalities that made the long decade a synonym for excess and moral breakdown. It aims to show how the paroxysms of the 1960s continue to reverberate throughout the culture, living on in U.S. educational and cultural institutions. The book is organized around portraits of the architects of the U.S. cultural revolution, including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Timothy Leary. Twelve chapters include: (1) "Introduction: What Is a Cultural Revolution?"; (2) "A Gospel of Emancipation"; (3) "Norman Mailer's American Dream"; (4) "Susan Sontag and the New Sensibility"; (5) "The Liberal Capitulation"; (6) "The Politics of Delegitimation"; (7) "The Marriage of Marx and Freud"; (8) "The Greening of America"; (9) "The Project of Rejuvenilization"; (10) "Eldridge Cleaver's Serial Extremism"; (11) "A Nostalgia for Molotov"; and (12) "What the Sixties Wrought." Each chapter includes notes. (BT)

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